

**Opening Remarks of Chairman Henry J. Hyde
Before a Full Committee Meeting to Mark Up
H.R. 2745, the United Nations Reform Act of 2005**

**Wednesday, June 8, 2005
2172 Rayburn House Office Building**

The subject of today's markup is the Act to reform the United Nations.

This Committee has been looking into the leadership and management of the United Nations over the course of two Congresses. During our oversight hearings, it has become apparent that fundamental and wide-ranging reforms are needed at the United Nations if we are to avoid repeating the recent events of mismanagement and ethical lapses, and if the challenges the future holds for the United Nations are to be successfully met.

As I recognized at an earlier hearing, many regard the word "reform," as it is used in relation to the UN, with suspicion, viewing it as a vehicle by which the United States can surreptitiously inflict intentional damage on an institution unpopular with the American public. But those who would claim an American antipathy to the United Nations are unfamiliar with the history of the organization. The United States was the originator of the idea of the United Nations and its birth parent, as it had been decades before with the League of Nations. We bring the same constructive spirit to today's markup of the UN reform bill.

The Act before us today does not oppose the UN's role in facilitating diplomacy, mediating disputes, monitoring the peace and feeding the hungry. Quite the contrary: It offers the hope of furthering these admirable goals through reforms which will strengthen the UN and enable it to meet its mandate in these areas.

The Act does, however, address the UN's legendary bureaucratization, billions of dollars spent on multitudes of programs with meager results, and outright misappropriation and mismanagement of funds represented by the emerging scandal regarding the Oil-for-Food program.

No observer, be they passionate supporter or dismissive critic, can pretend that the current structure and operations of the UN represent an acceptable standard. Even the UN itself has acknowledged the need for reform and, to

its credit, has put forward a number of useful proposals for consideration. But it cannot be expected to shoulder this burden alone or, human nature and institutional inertia being what it is, initiate some of the more difficult reforms.

This Act will usher in reforms that both Republican and Democratic administrations alike have long called for, including a more focused and accountable budget -- one that reflects what should be the true priorities of the organization, shorn of duplicative, ineffective, and outdated programs. In addition to the major budget reforms, the Act addresses oversight and accountability at the UN, peacekeeping and human rights.

The proposed reforms are self evident, given the problems that have dogged the UN these past few years. The mechanisms in the Act that are designed to leverage reform at the UN, however, merit more comment.

These leverage mechanisms are essential to achieving reform at the UN. Without these levers, reform will fail or be incomplete at best. The levers include the following:

- withholding 50 percent of U.S. assessed dues if certifications of reforms are not made in key areas;
- mandating cuts in specific programs;
- redirecting funds to priority areas; and
- withholding U.S. support for expanded and new peacekeeping missions until certifications are made that reforms have been enacted.

I look forward to working together with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to make the United Nations become the institution it was intended to be and to fulfill the mission envisioned by its founders.

I now turn to my good friend and colleague, the Ranking Democratic Member, Mr. Lantos.